UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.105/PV.381
15 June 1993

ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 381st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 8 June 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. HOHENFELLNER (Austria)

- General exchange of views (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages, preferably in the same language as the text to which they refer. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also, if possible, incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent, within one week of the date of this document, to the Chief, Official Records Editing Section, Office of Conference Services, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza.

Any corrections to the records of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

93-85975 4355V (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS (continued)

Mr. ORDZHONIKIDZE (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): On behalf of the Russian delegation, I should like to express deep satisfaction, Mr. Chairman, with your statement about the work of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) over the past year, which marked the beginning of our work this session. The wealth of factual material introduced in your statement, was coupled with interesting observations regarding problems and trends in the development of international cooperation in outer space and the role of the United Nations and, thus, our Committee in that process.

The historic changes that have taken place throughout the world in recent years have led to outer space no longer being seen as a launching-pad for building up military might or a means of strengthening political prestige. In present-day circumstances, States tend more to see activities in outer space through the prism of what can be called their own "earth-bound" interests: using the achievements of space science and technology for the goals of economic development and social progress.

In these circumstances, a more important role must be played by the United Nations, which is called upon to serve as a centre for agreeing on efforts to be made by the world community in the peaceful conquest of space in the interests and for the benefit of mankind as a whole. Naturally, the key role in such efforts lies with COPUOS, which, during its more-than-thirty-year history, has proved itself to be an authoritative forum capable of coming to generally acceptable decisions on the broad range of associated political, legal, scientific and technological problems.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

In today's political conditions, it is quite natural that, as a priority issue on its agenda for the current session, the Committee is examining the problem of seeking ways and means to keep outer space peaceful and to use it for peaceful purposes. Of course, the strengthening of peace and security and the establishment of an atmosphere of stability and trust in international relations, as is now recognized by almost everyone, depends not least on keeping outer space peaceful and free from the arms race. We, for our part, have constantly advocated and continue to advocate, transparency and predictability in the activities of States in outer space, as we have frequently emphasized in our negotiations on nuclear and outer-space weapons in the Conference on Disarmament.

Now, in the absence of confrontation between super-Powers and with a political climate throughout the world that has changed for the better, both sides have the possibility of rejecting their "star wars" plans. The Russian delegation would like to inform the Committee that, through a decree issued this May by the President of the Russian Federation, we have taken out of service the whole set of space defense weapons we have in our country. In approaching the problem of keeping outer space peaceful, it should be borne in mind that the purely disarmament aspects are far from being exhausted.

In States' outer space activities today, the philosophy of cooperation, must be reaffirmed, and it is incumbent on the Committee to be an active guide for this process. The scope for cooperation is tremendously broad; space technology can be used for studying the natural resources of the Earth and the oceans, changes in climate and the atmosphere, development of technologies for producing new materials, medicines and biological compounds, space-based telecommunications, shipping services and so on.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze,
Russian Federation)

I should like to emphasize that Russia is open for world-wide cooperation in outer space. Today we are primarily concerned with economically cost-effective and commercially justifiable projects. In order to implement these, we are prepared to make the necessary commitments. In so doing, we are of course counting on conditions for equitable partnership being respected that rule out any unjustified restrictions on participation by Russian industry in carrying out international projects in outer space.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

It is from this point of view that we advocated, in our negotiations with our partners, fair participation for our country in the international market for space services. In this connection, the Russian delegation welcomes the statement yesterday by the Deputy President of the Commission of the European Communities that the agreement on the use of Russian rockets for launching European satellites have finally been agreed.

The Russian Federation is in favour of wide-ranging development of joint action with the United Nations along the lines of the international programmes being implemented under United Nations auspices to cooperate in outer space. In this context, bearing in mind the scale of the problems, we feel that it would be advisable to prioritize the Committee's consideration of the issues involved in the use of space technology for environmental purposes. In particular, it is the view of our delegation that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee could play a more active role in implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, including setting up global monitoring of the environment using space-based methods.

Another major problem is the progressive pollution of near-Earth space by artificial objects, the problem of space debris. A study of some of the aspects of the problem is being undertaken in our country in such fundamental areas as research into the sources and processes of space debris, and measures to reduce it, and research into the physical and chemical interreactions between space debris and space vehicles.

At present, a whole range of research is under way on these problems. It is being undertaken by our largest institutes involved in creating rocket and space technologies, and the Russian Academy of Sciences is also participating.

(Mr. Ordzhonikidze, Russian Federation)

A major area of scientific research is the acquisition, condensation and analysis of data on space debris levels on the basis of observations of space detritus, and the study of the physical processes by which space debris clumps together and of its nature and motion in order to ensure the safety of space flights. This area is being headed by a special scientific research centre which has recently been set up in Russia, called Cosmos, and is based on data from the regular monitoring of near-Earth space by our space control system.

The condensed results of this research we are carrying out, together with similar work undertaken by research centres in other States, may, in our view, make it possible for the COPUOS to embark on a practical examination of this complex problem from all points of view.

The results of the work of the world community on the use of outer space for peaceful purposes depends primarily upon how successful we are in consolidating international efforts in this area and involving in the work of the Committee the efforts of those States that show interest and that are ready to make their own practical contributions. Therefore, the delegation of the Russian Federation supports the request by the Republic of Kazakhstan to become a member of this Committee, for Kazakhstan was the country where the first artificial satellite was launched and the first cosmonaut in the world was sent into space. We feel that there is every reason why they should join in our work.

Mr. SHMAROV (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. Chairman, first of all, the delegation of Ukraine would like to state that we are pleased to see you as Chairman of the Committee. We feel certain that under

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

your skilled guidance, the present session of the Committee will cope with the tasks before it. We should like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The establishment of a Ukrainian State and its becoming part of the world community as a sovereign State, independent and deciding upon its own fate, was a turning-point for my country. In this assembly, I should like once again to reaffirm the belief of the Ukraine in the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the generally recognized norms of international law, and also our unshakeable resolve to build a genuinely democratic society.

Having set out along the path of independent development for our State, we attach great importance to widening our participation in all areas of international cooperation, and it goes without saying that this is just as true for the area of the exploration and use of outer space.

Allow me briefly to inform the Committee about Ukraine's space activities.

The well-known political and economic changes that have taken place in recent years in the countries that have emerged on the territory of the former USSR have also been reflected in the area of outer space and have demanded considerable changes in this sector. Historically speaking, Ukraine played a major role in the Soviet Union's space programme and has considerable capability in outer-space science, technology and industry. The scientific research institutes, design offices and industrial enterprises of the Ukraine were integrated into the powerful space infrastructure of the Soviet Union and worked within it in a context of wide-ranging cooperation. I recall that Ukraine developed and produces the Zenit and Tsiklon rocket launchers; various space vehicles - satellites in the international INTERCOSMOS programme, the Cosmos series, Okean and others - more than 300 vehicles in all; their control

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

systems; and instruments for basic and applied research. Ukrainian engineers and scientists have significant achievement to their name in the fields of space materials and designs. Ukraine did a tremendous volume of work on the Salyut, Mir, Energia and Buran programmes.

A year ago, the President of Ukraine set up a national space agency designed to guide State space policy. This agency has two major tasks before it: first, to determine Ukraine's capabilities in the space field, i.e., in effect to take a complete inventory of its science, technological and industrial capacity; and secondly, to determine the needs of our economy for "space production", so called.

Carrying out this exercise has laid the groundwork for developing a national space programme for Ukraine.

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

The programme provides for the development of the space industry in Ukraine up to the year 2000 in three stages. In setting up the programme, we based ourselves on the following principles: first, on continuing and developing cooperation with the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and other States, on a mutually beneficial basis and on supporting existing forms of cooperation in science and industry; second, on establishing our own space technology, the necessary infrastructure for it on the ground, bringing together science and industry in the same place as far as possible and organizing our control over our space activities; third, on directing our space activities along economic lines and achieving tangible results in the shortest possible time; fourth, on ensuring Ukraine's security; fifth, on the dual purpose of space technology, by bearing in mind both our country's economic and its defence interests; sixth, on continuing basic scientific research; seventh, on keeping and developing our scientific, technological and managerial capability, the unique experimental science basis for our technology and our industrial capacity; eighth, on carrying out controlled conversion in science and industry; ninth, on integrating ourselves into the international community as a spacefaring Power and cooperating with world producers and consumers of space technology; and, tenth, on marketing our space activities.

Ukraine's national space programme has been developed from the point of view of meeting the needs of the economy. Specifically, it is serving the following areas: computerization of the economy with telecommunications of all kinds - radio, television and retransmission up- and down-links; rational natural resource usage, environmental monitoring, weather forecasting and advance warning of natural disasters and extreme weather conditions; study of

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

natural resources on land and in the seas, and planetary climate and atmospheric developments; acquiring new data to enhance our basic understanding of the Earth, the Sun, space and other planets; development of space technologies to develop new materials, medicines and biological compounds; enhancing and supporting our unique experimental base and specialized products; developing space transportation systems; and laying the scientific and technological groundwork for space rocket technology for economic purposes in the longer term.

Our national space programme consists of the following sections, about which I should like to inform you briefly. Fuller details will be made available about our national space programme to all those interested.

Firstly, there are space-based telecommunications and data systems; this section of the programme takes about 20 per cent of the budget. The programme makes provision for three forms of telecommunication: fixed, mobile and radio and television broadcasting. Since at present Ukraine does not have its own space vehicles, in the first stage the problem of increasing telecommunication capacity is being solved by increasing the number of leased channels on Russia's telecommunications satellites Gorizont, Ekran-M and on a number of satellites on which data channels have become free through conversion. We are also increasing the number of services offered by the International Maritime Satellite Organization, International Telecommunications Satellite Organization and European Telecommunication Satellite Organization systems. In the longer term, the development of space-based telecommunications will be based on our participation in the Marathon, Express and Coupon projects, and we are working on the capabilities of the Romantis and Sovcanstar projects.

The programme is financing the development of our national telecommunication satellite "Libid", which is to be launched in 1996. Work is

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

also under way on the Ariadna project, which is a series of low-orbit satellites to provide global telecommunications that is being financed on a commercial basis, with participation by foreign investors. We feel that we should expand cooperation in carrying out these projects. Ukraine already has cooperation from France, Britain and Italy.

In this same section of the programme, we plan to carry out work on providing services to shipping by providing location and time information and a vessel-in-distress system.

The second and largest area of the space programme is Earth observation from space; this takes about 22 per cent of the budget. At the present time, the needs of more than 20 Ministries and departments in Ukraine for space-based products is being met through receiving data from existing satellites, whether Russian or other. Setting up a Ukrainian State network to acquire, process and interpret space-based information for users does present a number of difficulties. Formerly, the data was handled centrally through the structures of the USSR. Five regional centres - Kiev, Lvov, Kharkov, Dnepropetrovsk and Sebastopol - are being set up, which will be linked into a common data net.

Work is being carried out to establish a Ukrainian all-purpose remote-sensing satellite, the Okean-U, which is to be launched in 1994.

On the basis of our historical specialization in the field, the results of our many years of research, our experience in developing space technology and the fact that we have produced unique methodological developments and technological solutions for Earth remote sensing, Ukraine is one of the leading countries in the field of remote sensing of both land and sea, and has everything it needs to set up its own remote sensing system which could then

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

be included in an international space programme. We consider cooperation in remote sensing within the framework of international cooperation to show great promise, particularly cooperation with the countries bordering us.

The third section of the programme is space research and monitoring; this takes up about 13 per cent of the programme's budget. Here, Ukraine is participating actively through its financial contributions, its scientific capability and by supplying space technolgy to the following scientific space projects, Mars-94, Auos-SM - Coronas and Photon - Spektr, and others, for basic scientific space research.

An important part of the programme is its fourth part, which has to do with space biology and medicine, and space technology. This takes up 8 per cent of the programme's budget.

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

A space transport system takes up 13 per cent of the budget. In this area, the programmes provide for the improvement of existing rocket launchers, Tsiklon and Zenit. We are also working on a booster for the Zenit which will make it possible for the rocket to move out into a geostationary orbit and carry a payload of roughly two tonnes.

Work is under way on demilitarizing existing strategic rockets in Ukraine for use as carriers for peaceful purposes. Scientists in Ukraine are also working on the creation of an aviation space system on the basis of a wide-bodied aeroplane called "Maria". We believe that it would be useful to involve the efforts of other countries - for example, Russia, the United States, France, the United Kingdom and Germany - because the cost of the project is very high.

The sixth section of the programme is the experimental bases and infrastructure on the ground. Here I will simply say that we are planning a significant amount of work to support the infrastructure, on the ground and the scientific infrastructure, with a particularly large amount of work to support the Baykonur infrastructure, which is used jointly by Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

We are also planning to provide funds and create a programme for the development of such areas as staff training and scientific information activities.

Ukraine is also undertaking international space work. Greater detail about the space programme in Ukraine is available here to all those who are interested.

I should like also to support what my Russian colleague said about supporting the appeal to the Committee by our colleagues from Kazakhstan; the

(Mr. Shmarov, Ukraine)

delegation of Kazakhstan is present here, and is headed by Mr. Tokhtar Aubakirov, the well-known pilot and astronaut, who made a statement about the adoption by the Committee of the proposal to include the Republic of Kazakhstan in its membership. I think it was an objective statement, and it was justified, because the Republic of Kazakhstan today has, I think, the most powerful infrastructure in the world for creating and launching space vehicles. Such a country cannot remain outside the world's space community, and its views would without doubt be very important for that community.

In conclusion, I wish once again to express the readiness of Ukraine to cooperate internationally on the peaceful exploration of outer space, the use of space in resolving our problems here on Earth, and actively to participate in the Committee's work. We intend to dwell on these issues in detail when we reach the relevant items on the agenda for this session.

Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation has the pleasure of attending the thirty-sixth session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer space with you once again as its Chairman, Sir. We are sure that under your skilful and praiseworthy stewardship our Committee will succeed in satisfactorily completing its various tasks.

The Pakistan delegation would also like to place on record its appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered to the Committee by its two Subcommittees working under the direction of men of eminence: Professor John Carver and Mr. Mikulka, to whom we owe our sincere gratifude.

My delegation would also like to record its appreciation of the preparation of the report (A/AC.105/547) by the Secretariat. We endorse your

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

view, Sir, that the report will serve as a useful basis for future work and action by the Committee.

There is no denying the fact that space technology continues to register progress at a brisk pace and that the applications of space technology have been manifested in several fields to the benefit of all the nations of the world. However, as always, my delegation believes that the scientific and technological programmes of the nations should undoubtedly be peaceful in nature. Some of the peaceful applications are of considerable importance for the developing countries, and much more needs to be done to extend the full benefits of space research to those countries. Taking into account the established applications of space technology, the trend, on the whole, is for commercialization of related services drifting towards monopolization, which should not be allowed to become the primary consideration for promoting space technology applications activities.

Pakistan has always believed that outer space should be used only for peaceful purposes. Accordingly, Pakistan's space programme, as implemented by the national space agency the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO), is directed towards that goal. During 1992 Pakistan's space activities registered progress in several application fields, such as remote sensing data applications for resources and environmental studies; satellite communications research; atmospheric research and environmental pollution studies; and ionospheric research. In July 1992, a five-day short course on satellite-aided search and rescue operations was jointly organised at Lahore, Pakistan, by the Inter-Islamic Network of Space Science and Technology (ISNET) and SUPARCO. It was co-sponsored by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Standing Committee for Scientific and

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the COSPAS (Space System for Search for Distressed Vessels)-SARSAT (Search and Rescue Satellite-Aided Tracking) Council. Representatives from national search-and-rescue coordinating agencies attended the course. The course was designed to familiarize managers, search-and-rescue operators and service providers with the COSPAS-SARSAT system's concept, to highlight the global character of this programme, and to provide detailed information on the functioning of various constituent elements of its worldwide network.

As the representative of China has said, in December 1992 the first Asia-Pacific Workshop on Multilateral Cooperation in Space Technology and Apoplications was held in Beijing, China. It was jointly organized by the China International Exchange Centre for Space Science and Technology (CIECS), the China Society for Astronautics (CSA), the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission and the Thailand Ministry of Transport and Communications. About 120 top technologists, experts and decision-makers from 17 Asia-Pacific countries, including United Nations experts, participated in the Workshop and made several presentations on scientific, technical and policy issues. The participants adopted several recommendations to enhance multilateral cooperation in space technology and its applications in the Asia-Pacific region. The next conference in this connection is scheduled to be held in Thailand in January 1994 to review and further discuss modes, approaches and projects as well as the relevant issues involved in further promoting multilateral cooperation in space technology and applications between the Asia-Pacific region countries.

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

Pakistan also played host to the annual meeting of the Directors of the national remote sensing centres and programmes in the region of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), which was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 8 to 12 May 1993. The meeting was organized by the ESCAP Regional Remote Sensing Programme in cooperation with the Pakistan national space agency - the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) - and was co-sponsored by the Government of France. Forty participants from 23 countries and organizations attended the meeting, including representatives of three United Nations agencies - ESCAP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) - and three international or regional agencies or organizations - the Asian Development Bank, the European Space Agency and the International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences (ITC). During that meeting, the ninth session of the Intergovernmental Consultative Committee (ICC) on the ESCAP/UNDP Regional Remote Sensing Programme was also held, chaired by Pakistan, the current Chairman of ICC. A number of recommendations were adopted at the Directors' meeting; these could have far-reaching effects on the activities of the Regional Remote Sensing Programme.

Work on the development of Pakistan's second experimental satellite, BADR-B, is in progress. BADR-B will a 50-kilogramme-class microsatellite designed to be launched into sun-synchronous orbit towards the end of 1994, with an in-orbit life of about two years. The satellite will carry payloads for a store-and-forward experiment and an Earth-imaging experiment. In

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

addition, the satellite would carry a dosimeter experiment for measuring the ionization radition levels encountered in polar orbits, and an end-of-charge detector experiment for monitoring battery-charge status. These are being incorporated with the active collaboration of the European Space Agency.

The delegation of Pakistan sincerely wishes that at the present session the Committee will make good progress on long-outstanding issues on its agenda. My delegation, as in the past, is committed to making positive contributions and efforts to achieve the long-cherished goal: the promotion of peaceful applications of space science and technology on an international scale. My delegation will be making further contributions on other items of the Committee's agenda as and when they are taken up.

Mr. FULDA (Germany): First of all, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, under its excellent Chairman, Ambassador Hohenfellner, as well as the Subcommittees and working groups, on their outstanding work. Let me add that we will continue to place the Committee's most delicate problems into your experienced hands, Sir, knowing that there is no better way of achieving consensus in the Committee. The Federal Republic of Germany is prepared to continue to play an active role in the use of space for the benefit of all.

Looking back over developments since our last session, we can happily note that, on 14 December 1992, the General Assembly, at its forty-seventh session, adopted the Set of Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space. Those Principles were finally formulated after 13 long years of discussion in this Committee and its two Subcommittees. Of course, it must be remembered that the results of such a process can only be

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

compromise solutions. Yet we are all aware of the fact that we have reached a pragmatic solution which is acceptable to all of us. We have agreed that a review of the Principles should be started immediately. Such a review may be necessary given the fact that science and technology have made substantial progress since work on the catalogue began. All new initiatives will be given careful attention. We think that discussion of the Principles, if any is needed, could begin during next year's session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. It goes without saying that the validity of the Principles will be unaffected until the revision process arrives at a new consensus.

Let me turn to the question of space debris. The urgency of this problem is reflected in the fact that, during the last few years, it has been raised in a steadily growing number of contributions to the discussions in this Committee and its Subcommittees. The German delegation is firmly convinced that the issue of space debris is important enough to be made a separate item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We have to be aware that this problem needs much further investigation.

The first European conference on space debris, which was organized in Darmstadt last April by the European Space Agency (ESA), the German Space Agency (DARA), the British National Space Centre (BNSC) and the Italian Space Agency (ASI), showed once more how much work needs to be done in order to get an overview of the scientific and technological dimensions of the problem.

This Committee should therefore propose to the General Assembly that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee start a comprehensive discussion of the ever growing problem of space debris. It is in the interest of all

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

spacefaring nations, those already active as well as those still emerging, to take up this question. In Germany, space debris research is very actively pursued at several research centres and universities. Since scientific progress can be achieved only by making available full information and ensuring optimum transparency of scientific results, we declare ourselves ready to share our findings, as far as possible, with all interested delegations in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

It must be reiterated time and again that the use of space for peaceful purposes is a very important task for mankind as a whole. Here we have a field of cooperation where bridges can be built between all the peoples on Earth, be they rich or poor. Germany is keen that these bridges should be as strong as possible, so we welcome the plans of the Office for Outer Space Affairs to make the use of space applications available to countries undergoing development. We have supported the missions to Africa organized by the Office for Outer Space Affairs to evaluate possible sites for the planned centres for space applications.

Germany is taking part in United Nations training programmes. The next course will be organized by the Potsdam Centre for Geological Research and will be held in Nepal this autumn. We deliberately go out of Germany for this purpose in order better to contribute to public awareness of these high-tech potentials in a specific third-world country.

Germany will always be open to constructive cooperation in space. The only qualification I unfortunately have to make is that imposed by budget constraints, which place a considerable damper on our best political

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

intentions. Under these circumstances we certainly could and should seek to strengthen international cooperation in order to get the necessary things done in the most efficient way.

At the request of the United Nations Cartographic Department, the German-sponsored D2 mission provided the United Nations with data on Cambodia in order to help the Organization's efforts to bring peace to that troubled country. It may be noted that this was not the first time that Germany had provided such services to the United Nations, as ERS-1 data was provided in 1992. We very much hope that this can contribute at least something to supporting international assistance for Cambodia.

(Mr. Fulda, Germany)

Just a few months ago, the D2 mission was finally launched, with the help of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration of the United States (NASA), for which we are very grateful. The mission proved to be very successful, and my delegation will take the opportunity to report on several of its highlights under later agenda items. The Mission can chalk up successes not only in life science, Earth observation and microgravitation but, in particular, in the first use of the robotic experiments of Rotex, which seem to have provided us with very promising results. We believe that science and technology throughout the world will in due course profit from the outcome of the mission. We hope to be able to report more about this during next year's Scientific and Technical Subcommittee session.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Office for Outer Space Affairs and its Chief, Mr Jasentuliyana, for its outstanding work. We hope and are sure that the Office will continue its invaluable activities.

Looking beyond the traditional day-to-day practice, maybe we could discuss bringing some more flexibility into the agendas of the Committee and its Subcommittees. We should have a careful look at them in order to check the relevance of the various items. In this way we can, hopefully, make the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees even more efficient. We should also consider the possibility of shortening sessions, particularly those of the Legal Subcommittee, thus flexibly responding to the workload of each year's agenda.

The German delegation is looking forward to another very interesting session of Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We hope that it will once again bring fruitful results in the interest of all mankind and we wish the Committee every success.

Mr. YAMAMOTO (Japan): Mr. Chairman, I should like first of all to express my pleasure at seeing you in the Chair. I am sure that, with the benefit of your well-known skill and broad experience, the present session of the Committee will be a very successful one. I wish also to extend my best wishes to the other officers of the Committee, to the Chairmen of the two Subcommittees, as well as to the Secretariat staff.

As is clear from the reports now before us, the Subcommittees have done an excellent job this year. This is clearly a reflection of the fact that an increasing number of countries are gaining a better awareness of the shared burdens and responsibilities entailed in space activities. Japan welcomes this atmosphere of cooperation, and sincerely hopes that it will prevail as we pursue our work in the weeks and months ahead.

At this preliminary stage, I just want to outline Japan's basic considerations with regard to a number of issues, although my delegation is certainly interested in hearing the views and comments of other members.

First, my delegation believes we need to set in motion consideration of the question of space debris by establishing the most effective possible procedures. Japan fully shares the concerns of many nations about the possible hazards posed by space debris. While making the maximum effective use of orbits, we must ensure that any potential danger is minimized. This will require an exhaustive, objective scientific analysis of the problems involved. Indeed, an objective scientific analysis is of critical importance and preliminary to any future endeavours. Accordingly, Japan would support the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

The second issue is that of a third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE 3), although my

(Mr. Yamamoto, Japan)

delegation is not so sure that such a conference is still in fact relevant to our work. Japan is very sympathetic to the possible underlying consideration, namely, the desirability of sharing the benefits derived from space activities among as many nations as possible. Yet, the need, appropriateness or terms of reference of such a major conference are far from obvious. We have to be very careful, therefore, not to attach undue importance to ill-defined projects and to make the most of the opportunity to discuss the matter at the session of COPUOS. A full clarification of the issue involved will be necessary before we are persuaded that such a conference is worth while.

Thirdly, Japan highly appreciates, and is reassured by, the moves towards the rationalization of our work, particularly in connection with the Legal Subcommittee. I am sure that under your guidance, Mr. Chairman, and with the benefit of our accumulated wisdom and experience, the question of venue for the Committee as well as its Subcommittees will be appropriately resolved.

Lastly, the importance of conducting, in a timely manner, a review of the principles governing the use of nuclear power sources cannot be overemphasized. Thus Japan is pleased that ample time is being allocated for this purpose, both in the Scientific and Technical and in the Legal Subcommittees.

I do not think it is necessary to reaffirm the value of this Committee; all members, I am sure, recognize and support the important work it is doing. The responsibility to develop a framework for using outer space for the benefit of all humankind is enormous, but the prospects that we shall be successful are excellent indeed. The Outer Space Treaty provides us with appropriate and reasonable guidance. Hence, and transcending the outdated

(Mr. Yamamoto, Japan)

categorization of countries according to their development status in the context of outer space activities, my delegation is confident that in addressing the complex issue the Committee will be able to strike a proper balance between political and scientific demands.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.